

“How Can My Hindu Friend Justify Her Unethical Behavior?”

Probe Ministries Administrator

I had an associate for 3 years who was a devoted Hindu.... On the surface they seem nice, but over time it became apparent they allowed for violations of ethics and contracts that I would not have expected. How is this allowed in their culture? They follow the “Laughing” form of Hinduism. The husband laughed at everything as a way to create good karma. I witnessed to them both with very limited effect. I am now planning a trip to India and these questions seem most relevant. Can you help me understand this seeming contradiction in their thought?

Note from the Web coordinator, Byron Barlowe: We asked our Indian friend Rajesh Sebastian to reply. Not only is Rajesh from the predominantly Hindu culture of India and thus highly qualified to comment, but he is also trained in worldview apologetics. Rajesh worked for Ravi Zacharias Ministries and remains a resource person for them in India. He also received his Th.M. from Dallas Theological Seminary.

1. Regarding Contradiction in Indian-Hindu culture: Your friend mentions contradiction. For a Hindu, it is not a problem to live with contradictions. According to Hindus, you talk about contradictions because you are narrow-minded (so it is your fault!). Hindus believe that god can be one and many! God is both good and evil! We see a total collapse of the Law of Non-contradiction in India. Truth is relative (Gandhi and other Indian philosophers made long argument to prove the argument). Therefore, it is possible for a Hindu to be religious and still manipulate ways to make extra income/profit. After all, what is wrong according to one god will be right according to another god. Such attitude in business help many to become more successful

than others who might go by the law and make less profit.

A good example I can think of is this one: A thief goes to steal. On the way, he stops at a temple and offers prayers and makes a promise. If he is not caught, he will give a share from the loot to that god/goddess or temple. So, Indians can be very religious and very corrupt at the same time without feeling bad about being corrupt. In fact, Mr. I. K. Gujral, who was the Prime Minister of India in the 90s for a couple of years, said that “corruption is in the blood of every Indian.” Indians believe in “both-and” logic (disagree with “either-or” logic) and can peacefully live with contradictions. This is why you will find even highly educated Hindus involved in superstitions.

Lesson to learn: When doing business with them, be careful. They do not believe in moral absolutes. “What works is right” and “end (more profit) justifies the means.” Moreover, it is possible for someone believing in karma to cheat you and live peacefully, thinking that you are suffering now because of your bad karma in the last life and that they are benefiting from it now because of their good karma in the last life! Indians are successful businessmen. A large percentage of motels in the US are already owned by Indians from a particular state where they worship a “goddess of wealth.” If money is your god, then you might do anything to get it.

2. Regarding the Laughing form of Hinduism: Hinduism is like a vast sea. There are lot of practices and beliefs that might be contradictory or different from each other. For example, there is a temple in India where they have a festival every year. Devotees go there during this festival that goes for a week and utter curses and abuses to the god in that temple. These are the worst words (@#\$%^&*^#%) you can imagine. They do it with the belief that this is a way of bringing out all the evil thoughts and anger in them and this god can take it so that they can get cleaned from all the dirt inside them.

Similarly, there are different yoga practices. If you walk around a park in

Delhi, or any other cities in India, you will find groups of people standing together and just shouting. They practice it as a form of yoga. Those who practice laughing believe that doing so will help them to control their anger and also will help them to see the positive side of life. Hinduism is all about getting things done. Practitioners look for success even if that includes bribing gods. If gods can be bribed, why can't people cheat? Remember, you cannot be better than the gods you worship. In fact, the Bible says that you will be like the gods you worship. "Contradiction" is an alien concept to Hindus. They will mock you and say you are saying "contradiction" because you are not tolerant of other views. You say there can be only one God because you are not tolerant of the opposite belief!! The only thing Hinduism can not tolerate is exclusivism.

3. In order to communicate the gospel to Hindus, a worldview approach starting with one common Creator might be a better way to go. Starting with Jesus as "Son of God" (they believe there are many sons, why only one?) or man as sinner does not make sense to them. Tell about a Father trying to save the lost ones through the sacrifice of Christ. It is important to abolish polytheistic worldview by showing that polytheism is a self-defeating belief as it teaches that all the minor gods were created by some major gods and finally points down to One Ultimate Being. You have to start from there and then show what that ultimate one will be like and what he has spoken to mankind.

Hope this helps little bit to clear some of the great confusion surrounding Hinduism. However, do not underestimate the system. Hinduism is like the great serpent that can swallow all systems except exclusivism and that is why Hindus are now fighting exclusive viewpoints in academic circles all over the world.

See the following resources from Probe on Jesus as the only way, or exclusivism vs. pluralism:

- [Christianity and Religious Pluralism](#) by Rick Wade
- [Do All Roads Lead to God? The Christian Attitude Toward Non-Christian Religions](#) by Rick Rood
- [What's the Difference Between Moral Relativism and Pluralism?](#) by Don Closson
- [How I Know Christianity is True](#) by Dr. Pat Zukeran. Note particularly the bibliography section, Is Jesus the Only Way?

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“Is A Course in Miracles Heretical? How Do I Talk to My Friend Who Believes It?”

Russ Wise

My friend says he believes in “A Course in Miracles.” I’ve been trying to help him to start to read the Bible instead so he sees the truth about Jesus. I’ve read [your article](#) that says the Course is anti-biblical and the work of an evil spirit.

I wonder now if this text is heretical also—not only anti-biblical? Also I’d be happy if you would describe more what heretical really mean according to the Bible. Because I think that I’ve read in the Bible that we shouldn’t associate with people who are heretics.

I really would be glad if my friend would become a christian who believes in Jesus Christ described in the Bible. So I’m wondering what attitude I should have towards him. I’ve read about Paul who in his apologetical

work in Athens speaks about the unknown God worshipped in Athens. Is a similar approach good in this case? To speak about that all the love he wants is in fact in the Biblical Jesus?

Or is it better to simply declare that I believe ACIM is the work of evil? But if it's heretical—can I associate with him more than to just state my faith in order to help come to believe in the Biblical Jesus Christ?

Thank you for your inquiry regarding *A Course in Miracles* as it relates to heresy. Allow me to give you a definition of heresy from which I tend to operate. I trust you will find it adequate! A heresy is a crime of perception—an act of seeing something that, according to some custodian of reality, is not truly there. Heresy, therefore, is always relative to an orthodoxy.

In the case of ACIM it is a heresy of orthodox Christianity. That is to say that the teachings of The Course are opposed to biblical orthodoxy. An example would be that The Course teaches that “no one is punished for their sins, and the Sons of God are not sinners” (p. 88). The Bible teaches a different understanding of man and his relationship to sin. Romans 3:10 tells us that no one is righteous. Romans 3:23 tells us that all have sinned. The word all is all inclusive—it means everyone, no one is exempt. We have all sinned. Our sin has separated us from God (Isaiah 59:2).

Another example that clearly shows us how different or unorthodox The Course is related to the Bible is the idea that “the separation is a faulty formulation of reality, with no effect at all” (p. 241). Ephesians 2: 1-3 tells us that we were dead in our transgressions and sins. Spiritual death is to be separated from God. Without God’s intervention those of us who are without God are destined to eternal death. The Course erroneously teaches that we are not really separated from God, but that our perceived separation is a faulty understanding of who we really are—we are One! There is no separation. The Bible, on the other hand, is quite clear—we are self-deceiving if we do not recognize our sin and its result, our

separation from a holy Creator God.

There are numerous other examples that could be pointed out as opposing teachings between the two texts (The Course and the Bible); some are included in my article. According to Helen Schucman The Course was given to her by Jesus. She sat in a trance state and auto-wrote what he dictated. However, the teachings of Ms. Schucman's "Jesus" are diametrically opposed to the teachings of Jesus in the Bible. Therefore, if we view the Bible as being orthodox (Truth), then we would by definition consider the teachings of The Course as heresy. In other words we have two Jesuses at play. One as represented by Ms. Schucman in The Course and another as revealed in the scriptures—the Bible: an authentic Jesus as the Bible reveals and a false "Jesus" found in the pages of ACIM.

The Law of Non-contradiction comes into play at this point. The Law of Non-contradiction simply states that two opposing statements cannot be true at the same time. They can be true at one point in history, but not concurrently. It also says that two opposing views can both be in error or that one of the two may be correct, but once again they both cannot be true at the same time. In our case we believe the Bible to be True and since the Bible teaches doctrine that opposes the teachings found in ACIM then The Course must be in error and exemplifies false teaching. The "Jesus" of ACIM is a false Christ (see Matthew 24: 20-24).

In regards to your concern whether you should continue your relationship or friendship with a friend who accepts ACIM as a legitimate teaching of Jesus, allow me to make a brief comment. I would continue to interact with them and allow them to share their thoughts. If they showed a desire to continue seeking God's Truth I would lovingly point out to them the discrepancies between the two texts. Once I had established the inconsistencies between the two I would then attempt to help my friend come to an awareness of the Law of Non-contradiction. Once I have had success regarding the above I would, then, begin a discussion concerning the trustworthiness of the scriptures. I would recommend Josh McDowell's text *The New Evidence that Demands a Verdict*. It can be found at

your local Christian bookstore or on Amazon.com. It is well worth the read and it will be a tremendous resource for you in sharing with your friend. [Ed. note: Also check out the [“Reasons to Believe” section](#) of the Probe website.]

If your friend, on the other hand, is not open to dialoguing and openly sharing his or her thoughts and beliefs about The Course and God’s revealed Word then I would reconsider another course of action. I would remain open to them and offer my friendship, but they would not be my confidant or my closest of friends. I would be cordial and agreeable as long as they continued to show an openness concerning their knowing God’s Truth. I believe Paul’s example on Mars Hill is highly instructive for us and how we might proceed in sharing our faith with someone who stands outside orthodoxy.

I pray that you would have God’s favor as you share your faith with your friend. May the Holy Spirit guide and direct your ways as you make Him known to those whom you come into contact.

Blessings,

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